

THE VOICE VOTING STRATEGY

OR

HOW TO PUT GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES
UNDER CONTRACT
WITHOUT LIFTING A FINGER OR
SPENDING A DIME!

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This article contains a strategy for getting control of our out-of-control government. It is divided into the following eight sections:

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THE REPUBLICAN CONTRACT: A FIRST STEP TOWARDS SOLVING THE PROBLEM

Recently, the Republican Party wrote a Contract With America, and voters elected Republicans to fulfill it. This is an historic event; for the first time, Congressional representatives have put campaign promises into writing: what's more, the People accepted the offer!

Whether the provisions of this contract are enacted or not, the idea of PUTTING REPRESENTATIVES UNDER CONTRACT is even more important than the provisions contained within it. It is a tentative first step towards solving a problem which effects us all.

In the past, the Representatives of either party could get away with old-style politics, which was "promise them the moon, give them an asteroid, and charge them for a solar system." But now those promises unkept and those hidden agendas enacted have mounted to an intolerable level -- reality has set in with a vengeance! Your paystub, FICA and all, sings the only tune you need to hear, and that tune is: where are the rights and powers you've paid for?

The answer, my friend, is "blowin' in the wind." Or is that "gone with the wind"? As go your dollars, so go your rights -- and your power. Yes, that feeling of helplessness you have and have had for so long is no mere intuition: it's the emotional echo of a financial sucking sound.

And what are you going to do about it? The answer may come as a shock: NOTHING! As you will see shortly, "doing nothing" can be devastatingly effective, provided that you do nothing at the right place and the right time!

THE PROBLEM

"Your" government is like a car, pedal to the metal, rubber to the road, going full throttle up against an immovable concrete wall. When the tread wears down to the hub, the car is elevated by pneumatic lift, the tires are replaced, the car is lowered, and the spinning begins anew. And the bill for the tires? That's sent care of "occupant," better known as "yours truly." Look at the recent health-care fun n' games; tens of millions of dollars were spent to draft the original legislation, to

lobby for it in Congress, and to persuade you that it was a "good idea." On the other side, tens of millions of dollars were spent to draft alternative legislation, to lobby against the various alternatives in Congress, and to persuade you that the whole idea was a "bad idea." And let's not forget the TIME spent by those 200 million Americans who played the captive audience of yet another production of the American Political Theater (presented by Washington, Inc.). And what do We, the People, have to show for this massive expenditure of time, money, and newspaper copy? NOTHING!

But ongoing shows demand patrons by subscription, voluntary or otherwise. To pay for this show, our surplus income will be sucked out of our collective accounts in the upcoming months, and (surprise, surprise) we'll be no further ahead than we began. Hmmm. And as it has gone, so will it go. As soon as technology and industry come up with an efficiency, government will gobble up this productivity in either phony projects it has no intention of enacting, or "pork" projects it has every intention of enacting.

"Doomed to spin" is the epitaph uncoordinated "occupants" are destined to have inscribed on their collective tombstone. However, if we think together and act (or fail to act) together, we can cut the cost of doing nothing in half without much difficulty, and resurrect ourselves in the process.

WHY WE HAVEN'T SOLVED OUR PROBLEM

Simple. We don't think and act together, which comes from failing to perceive a central insight:

You're a taxpayer. So am I. However, if you buy into the divide-and-conquer framework of both the political parties (with their "wedge issues" and "political footballs") and the national media (with its marketing of "conflict" to sell papers and garner ratings), you won't see yourself as a "taxpayer"; rather, as a "Republican" (opposed to "Democrats"), or as a "black" (opposed to "whites"), or as a "female" (opposed to "males"), etc., etc., etc.

As individuals on a mass scale slot themselves into these and dozens of other pre-defined and Establishment-stoked categories, a national fragmentation is created. With this fragmentation comes DISUNITY. In this disorganized state, American taxpayers are dead AS "taxpayers," and are now easy pickings for those who ARE a) organized and b) unified and c) well-funded. Those special interests, unified by their discrete and powerful desires, use the financial resources they have to implement government-mandated inefficiencies, which function to transfer "surplus" income from U.S. to THEM. (Note that decades-old wedge issues like "school prayer" and "abortion", pro or con, are of little relevance to these discrete financial interests). While you were watching the birdie, the fox was raiding the henhouse!

Disagreement costs. But the chief problem with the cost of disagreement is not just that the cost is so high, but that it is so EASY to incur. And the government's ease is your Achilles Heel.

By now it should be clear that government has mastered the art of taxation. Here again a divide-and-conquer strategy comes into play. You don't pay the total taxes you owe to government in one lump sum to one entity; that would reveal your total burden, and create a potentially unifying (and "destabilizing") focus. Rather, your tax burden is obscured by being SPLIT UP into bite-size chunks, each alone perhaps seen by you as "insignificant," perhaps "reasonable" -- 7% north, 4% west, 6% northwest, etc. But add them up, and you find yourself getting into REAL money: figure the social security tax you pay directly, plus the equivalent amount paid by your employer (reflected in your lower wages), plus Federal income tax, plus State income tax, plus property tax, plus sales tax, plus local taxes, plus license fees, plus the "hidden tax" of inflation, plus interest payments (the rates of which are mandated by the Federal Reserve), plus perhaps the most significant tax of all, the taxes hidden in the COSTS OF GOODS AND SERVICES (via excise taxes, duties, and those costs which have accrued from unnecessary government regulations, corruption, and special-interest "perks," not to mention the additional costs reflected in higher insurance payments from a government whose policies have not only failed to combat crime, but actually made it worse).

Add them up, and magically your share of the tax burden has risen from a "bite-size chunk" to anywhere from 1/3 to 1/2 of your labor hours, depending on your income and where you live; if you work 40 hours a week, anywhere from 12 to 20 of those hours are hours spent working for the State (Federal, State, and Local), and for most of us "liberation day" comes sometime on Wednesday. Wow. We're not talking about "chump change" here. Like it or not, you have a very real stake in this government, and those who seek to "opt out" without emigrating find themselves instead "opting in" to the Federal Penitentiary.

Am I conveying the seriousness of this?

How has government worked this miracle? Simple. NO EFFORT is required on your part for the transfer of hundreds of dollars a month from your private account to the public account; but effort IS required for you to directly contact the people who allocate your dollars. While government makes payment simplicity itself (it simply removes what you earn before you even see it, soothing the sting of its confiscation with the novocaine of anonymity), it does not simultaneously solicit your opinion (which it could easily do by printing several "check-off" boxes on your income tax form). The maxim underlying this policy is "get them to split the check, but don't let them order from the menu." The painlessness of financial contribution coupled with the painfulness of having to exert energy and dollars to make your opinion known creates an unhealthy and unexpected imbalance: over a hundred million more people give dollars to government than their opinions, though what we know of people tells us that the reverse should certainly be the case. The essence of this

phenomenon has a long pedigree; back in the old days, they called it "taxation without representation."

SOLVING OUR PROBLEM = A CONTRACT + A STRATEGY FOR ENFORCING THE CONTRACT

The key to solving the problem of taxation without representation lies in the House of Representatives. You might be wondering why the Republican Contract With America was only signed by the House Republicans, and not the Senate. This is part of the constitutional system: the House of Representatives (with its two-year terms that allow greater enforcement of campaign promises than the six-year terms of the Senate) is the body of government charged with representing the PEOPLE. And there are real teeth here.

The foundation for change is contained in two sections of Article One of the Constitution (Sections Seven and Nine). Here's the first (Section Seven, Clause One):

All Bills for raising Revenue shall originate in the House of Representatives . . .

Here's the second (Section Nine, Clause Six):

No Money shall be drawn from the Treasury, but in Consequence of Appropriations made by Law . . .

These clauses are perhaps the most significant checks of the many checks and balances" contained in the Constitution. In this case, the check is on government itself. As James Madison wrote in Federalist 58,

The house of representatives can not only refuse, but they alone can propose, the supplies requisite for the support of government. They, in a word, hold the purse . . . This power over the purse may, in fact, be regarded as the most complete and effectual weapon with which any constitution can arm the immediate representatives of the people, for obtaining a redress of every grievance, and for carrying into effect every just and salutary measure.

According to Madison, the key to government control is money (and since its YOUR money, you hold the key!). Money is the lifeblood of government; cut off the flow, and the government can no longer exist. Consequently, a threat to cut off this flow becomes the engine that will drive fundamental change through Congress. These provisions are the Constitutional "teeth" that will turn ounces of promises into pounds of results.

But how do we enforce these provisions? How do we coordinate our actions to turn these dormant Constitutional clauses into living Law? That's where the Republican contract comes in.

population, "Voter's Paradox" victims all, does not vote in off-year elections. Watch how we make lemonade out of this lemon!

THE STRATEGY

The VOICE Strategy (Phase 1)

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(|V|ote |O|ut |I|ncumbents for |C|ontract |E|nforcement)

The VOICE strategy is a two-part strategy, whose initial purpose is to get 218 Representatives (a majority in the House) to sign the People's Contract, a contract containing a bill (authored by the People) which demands that the bill be passed BEFORE the revenue receipt and distribution functions of government can go forward.

As you will see, the bill contained in the Phase 1 VOICE contract is totally innocuous, and has a purely symbolic function; the declaration of a "National Taxpayer's Recognition Day." This law fills a gap in the volume 36 of the United States Code, Section 141 and later, which recognizes people like Leif Erikson and the Wright Brothers as deserving of national recognition, with no mention of the people who devote 1/3 to 1/2 of their labor hours to the preservation of our form of government.

Some may argue that this is too "wimpy" a bill; after all, the bill does nothing, costs nothing, and affects no one in any SUBSTANTIVE way. That's precisely the point. First things first. Before we can do anything, we need to get COORDINATED, and we need some feedback that we have been coordinated, a necessary feedback that will break the back of the debilitating apathy brought on by the "Voter's Paradox" by letting us know "we're not alone," and that our vote DOES count. If the taxpayers of America coordinate themselves on THIS issue, then how can they coordinate themselves on far more divisive and problematic issues? Here, the "weakness" of the legislation is actually its strength:

- 1) No funds are required to implement this bill, so it is not vulnerable to the divisive charge of "more government."
- 2) The bill does not affect any special interests who would fight it in Congress.
- 3) There is no need to hold hearings, so the bill can be passed and signed in the first week of the first session of the 105th Congress, defusing the divisive fear that "government will shut down" (no, it won't; rather, the bill will pass).
- 4) There are no risks in the legislation itself that can be used to create a paralyzing and divisive fear.
- 5) It throws a spotlight on a key issue; you're a PATRON, not a PATSY.
- 6) Failure by the candidates to promise to implement a bill recognizing your existence sends a very clear message to you about your role in this government, and you should act accordingly!

Here's the first part of the strategy, the one already followed by 2/3 of the voting-age population in off-year elections:

to rotate the status quo (the alternative strategy, voting FOR incumbents, is a non-starter, since it would potentially create a permanently entrenched Congress, turning their two-year terms into terms for life). You have to send the message that CHANGE MUST OCCUR, and you do this by changing the name and the face of the person who refuses to recognize that you exist. Each rotation is a message that you will no longer be ignored. One day they're going to get that message.

You can no longer afford to give away your precious vote for a boatload of hot air -- what you GIVE is real, and what you GET should likewise be real -- a REAL vote for a REAL result.

THE CONTRACT

The People's Contract (Phase 1)

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I, _____, candidate for the House of Representatives, do hereby pledge to the People of my district and the United States to vote "no" on any legislation raising revenue or authorizing appropriations for the operation of any branch of government, pursuant to Article One, Sections Seven and Nine of the United States Constitution, until the foregoing bill creating a permanent "National Taxpayer's Recognition Day" is passed by Congress and signed into law by the President.

My failure to satisfy this contractual responsibility will constitute my resignation from the House of Representatives, effective immediately upon the date of violation.

A Bill to Implement National Taxpayer's Recognition Day.

105th CONGRESS H. R. 1 As Introduced in the House

VERSION As Introduced in the House
 CONGRESS 105th CONGRESS
 1st Session

BILL H. R. 1

TITLE To implement National Taxpayer's Recognition Day.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
 JANUARY 5, 1996

TEXT

A BILL

To implement National Taxpayer's Recognition Day.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled, that the fifth day of July of each year is hereby designated "National Taxpayer's Recognition Day."

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The VOICE Strategy (Phase 2)

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The passage of the Phase 1 VOICE bill is our signal that we are (finally!) coordinated. Once this necessary coordination has been achieved, we can move to Phase 2. Phase 2 will implement a mechanism that will enable us to draft and implement the People's Contract, either through polls, the Internet, cable, e-mail, fax, or a combination of the above. The language of the Phase 2 bill will be hammered out on bulletin boards throughout the nation. Once the Phase 2 VOICE bill has been enacted, we will be able to move to more substantive legislation than the creation of a "National Taxpayer's Recognition Day."

Subsequent phases of the VOICE strategy will involve implementation of actual bills, real legislation; term limits, balanced budgets, cancellation of "pork projects," etc. Those who pay the check will finally get to order something, however small, from the menu.

WHY THE STRATEGY IS SO POWERFUL

The concept of voting strategically is itself a powerful idea, apart from the merits of any specific strategy. Here are criteria for an effective strategy, with descriptions of how the VOICE strategy satisfies these criteria. You can use these criteria for any other strategies that come along, and see if they measure up.

NON-PARTISAN

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Partisan strategies are divisive, and thus self-defeating. The VOICE strategy unites the people, and favors no political party. If the strategy is followed, party control of Congress will flip every two years, unless the candidates sign the contract.

MONEY-FREE

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You don't need to contribute a cent to follow the strategy. Thus, there are no financial obstacles to its implementation.

TIME-FREE

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You don't have to show up at any meetings, put yourself on a mailing list, or join a committee. There are no petitions to sign, and no

offices to maintain. The strategy does not interfere with your everyday life. You don't even need to think about it until Election Day.

NON-PRE-EMPTIVE

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This strategy does not interfere with any other political activities you wish to engage in, or any other strategies you wish to pursue. You can protest abortion laws (or abortion rights), support prayer in school (or oppose it), or work for (or against) the President, whatever you want.

SIMPLICITY

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The VOICE strategy is very straightforward and utterly lacking in complexity, statable in 22 short words; consequently, it is easy to communicate, remember, and implement correctly. Because you don't even need to have a high school diploma to understand it, the strategy eliminates the divisiveness of a tiered educational system.

COMMUNICATION IS EASY

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This document is around 33k in size, and in ASCII format. This means that it is platform-independent; any computer user can read it, whether the user has a Mac, Windows, Unix, OS/2, Atari, or Amiga, and regardless of what word processing program the user owns. Because the strategy can be printed out, you don't even need a computer to read it, just a friend to give it to you. The small size of this document means that even a 1200 baud modem can retrieve it in less than half a minute: a 28.8 modem can get it in two seconds! The strategy is easy to copy and easy to e-mail, and "ease of use promotes use."

COMMUNICATION IS INEXPENSIVE

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No cost for the strategy itself means that the transaction costs associated with getting this document are minimal, confined to whatever charge your on-line service has for e-mail. You don't have to be rich to send or receive it.

NON-DEPENDENCE

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You don't need to rely on any "representatives" or agents to carry out this strategy; its implementation, or lack of it, is completely in your hands. And you don't need to rely on the media to transmit the message (they won't); you can do it yourself.

CONCEPTUAL

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The strategy is an IDEA; consequently, it transcends time and space, creating invulnerability to the desires and campaign contributions of the special interests. And, since it is an idea, the strategy can't disappoint you by "having an affair" or "violating an ethics guideline,"

"active"); everyone can act right up to the depth of their insight (if you like the idea, you can accelerate its spread). Because the strategy is restricted to Representatives, you only need to see yourself as a "taxpayer" for one office, and you don't have to follow the strategy for any other office, including Senator, President, Judge, Governor, Mayor, Attorney General, State Comptroller, etc.